

New Hampshire COVID-19 Travel Guidance

January 11, 2021

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues around the world and within the United States. Many countries, including the United States (see [individual state trends](#)), continue to have a high incidence of COVID-19, and new strains are emerging that appear to be more infectious and easily spread. Most international travel destinations continue to have a [Travel Health Notice](#) indicating high risk for COVID-19, with a recommendation to avoid non-essential travel. Therefore, any international or domestic travel increases a person's chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19; staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick.

The CDC has guidance for people [traveling within the United States](#). Because travel increases a person's chance of getting COVID-19 through close contact with others or contaminated public surfaces, anybody traveling should continue to avoid public transportation, avoid gatherings with people who are not immediate household members, keep a distance of at least 6 feet from others, wear a face mask when in public areas, and frequently sanitize their hands.

New Hampshire recommends the following travel and quarantine guidance for residents and visitors to NH in order to prevent introduction and spread of COVID-19 into our communities from areas outside of NH that may be experiencing higher community spread of COVID-19. There is separate guidance for employers/employees related to travel and quarantine outlined in the [NH Universal Guidelines](#) and [NH DPHS Employee Travel, Screening, and Exclusion Guidance](#). Other organizations and individuals for whom the business guidance may not apply (e.g., public schools) should follow this guidance, or adapt this guidance to their specific situation and needs by developing travel and quarantine policies that allow for essential travel to occur while protecting individuals, families, and communities from introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Travel Quarantine Guidance

Travelers/visitors to **AND residents** of NH need to [self-quarantine](#) for 10 days following the last date of any high-risk travel, which includes travel internationally (including to/from Canada); on a cruise ship; or domestically outside of the New England states of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, or Rhode Island for non-essential purposes.

People meeting the criteria for high-risk travel have the option of ending their quarantine after day 7 by getting a test on day 6-7 of their quarantine to test for active SARS-CoV-2 infection (SARS-CoV-2 is the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19); this test must be a molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test); antigen tests are not accepted for this purpose. If the test is obtained on day 6-7 of quarantine, the person is asymptomatic, and the test is negative, then the person can end their quarantine after 7 days, but they must still [self-observe](#) for symptoms of COVID-19 and strictly adhere to COVID-19 mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social and group gatherings, wearing a face mask when around other people, practicing frequent hand hygiene, etc.). Any new [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should prompt the person to isolate and seek testing again (even if the person recently tested out of quarantine). This 7-day quarantine "test out" option ONLY applies to travel-related quarantine (not quarantine due to a high-risk close contact exposure to a person with COVID-19).

It is permissible for travelers/visitors to NH to quarantine in their home state for the 10 days immediately prior to arrival as long as they did not travel on public transportation to get to NH. Alternatively, travelers/visitors to NH have the option of quarantining in their home state for 7 days, and obtaining a molecular test (e.g., PCR-based test) to test for active SARS-CoV-2 infection immediately prior to arrival to NH, and if negative the traveler is not required to quarantine upon arrival to NH as long as they did not travel on public transportation to get to NH and had no other potential exposures to COVID-19. Antigen tests are not accepted for this purpose. Quarantine means the person may not leave their home, even for work, school, or other essential functions, and the person traveling to NH may not end quarantine before receiving their test result and before traveling to NH (i.e., from the point of testing negative until their arrival in NH, there must be no other potential public exposures).

Exceptions to Travel Quarantine

The following people do NOT need to quarantine after high-risk travel:

1. Persons who are 14 days beyond the second dose of their COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., 14 days after full vaccination).
2. Persons who are within 90 days of a prior SARS-CoV-2 infection that was diagnosed by PCR or antigen testing (if a person had a previous infection that was more than 90 days prior, then they are still subject to travel quarantine).

Such persons, however, still need to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 daily, practice social distancing, avoid social and other group gatherings, always wear a face mask when around other people, and practice good hand hygiene at all times.

Additional exceptions to the travel quarantine can be made by businesses, organizations, schools, etc. for people traveling due to “essential travel” purposes who do not meet one of the above two criteria. Essential travel includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, parental shared custody, for medication, and for food or beverage (brief trips for take-out and groceries only). Essential travel also includes travel for students and their parents or guardians who are visiting institutions of higher learning or preparatory high schools as potential future students, including allowing the students to remain at the schools for overnight stays. Non-essential employees who travel to higher risk areas for personal or leisure reasons cannot rely on this “essential travel” exemption (see NH DPHS Employer Travel, Screening, and Exclusion Guidance for more information about “essential employee” designation and guidance).

Organizations should develop their own travel and exclusion policies following public health guidance (this guidance and the [NH DPHS Employee Travel, Screening, and Exclusion Guidance](#)) and the [NH Universal Guidelines](#). “Essential travel” and “essential employee” exceptions to travel quarantine requirements, however, should not be standard practice and all efforts should be made to allow individuals to work, learn, or perform other important functions remotely during their quarantine period. People permitted to work or attend school despite higher risk travel must still quarantine for all other purposes other than work or school (unless fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or previously infected within the prior 90 days), and must not attend social functions or gatherings during their quarantine period.

Travel Quarantine Summary



Symptom/Test Status	Traveled internationally, by cruise ship, or domestically outside of New England	Travel within New England or No Travel
New or unexplained symptom of COVID-19	<p>Isolate and get tested immediately.</p> <p>If negative the person can return to normal activities once they are at least 24 hours without a fever (off fever-reducing medications) and other symptoms are improving, AND one of the following criteria apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Person has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (at least 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine), <u>or</u> person previously tested positive for active COVID-19 in the prior 90 days. 2. Person completes self-quarantine for 10 days from last day of travel 3. Travel was “essential travel” 4. Person ends quarantine after day 7 with a negative SARS-CoV-2 test on day 6-7 of quarantine (must be a molecular test to detect active infection, such as a PCR test) <p>(Note: If person was tested before days 6-7 of quarantine due to symptoms and was negative, then a second test on day 7 is still required to end quarantine after 7 days.)</p>	<p>Isolate and get tested immediately.</p> <p>If negative the person can return to normal activities after at least 24 hours without a fever (off fever reducing medications) and other symptoms are improving.</p>
No symptoms (Asymptomatic)	<p>Self-Quarantine for 10 days from last day of travel (unless: travel was deemed “essential travel”, person is fully vaccinated and at least 14 days have passed since receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or person previously tested positive for active COVID-19 in the prior 90 days.)</p> <p>Person has the option of ending quarantine after day 7 with a negative SARS-CoV-2 test on day 6-7 of quarantine (must be a molecular test to detect active infection, such as a PCR-based test).</p>	No restrictions
Positive Test for COVID-19	Self-Isolate	Self-Isolate

Essential Travel: Essential travel includes for work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, parental shared custody, for medication, and for food or beverage (brief trips for take-out and groceries only). Essential travel also includes travel for students and their parents or guardians who are visiting institutions of higher learning or preparatory high schools as potential future students, including allowing the students to remain at the schools for overnight stays. Non-essential employees who travel to higher risk areas for personal or leisure reasons cannot rely on this exemption.

What is the difference between Isolation and Quarantine?

Isolation applies to people who are sick or infected with the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19; and quarantine applies to people who have been potentially exposed and are at risk of becoming infected. They both mean a person needs to stay home away from others, but the time required for each differs. See this overview of differences [online](#).